

# NHS spending and capacity

The NHS needs more capacity to get the waiting lists down. During the pandemic the NHS did provide many more beds in the Nightingale units in case the pandemic caseloads became too great. They resisted advice to use these facilities for all covid work to keep the General hospitals infection free and able to carry on with their regular work. As a result we have a big backlog.

Large additional sums of money have been made available to the NHS to handle the one off costs of tackling the pandemic, and to deal with the waiting lists. In order to cut waiting lists we may well need more beds in the NHS. It has been one of the features of the NHS that managers have always chosen to operate with relatively few beds compared to the workload and have said they aim to make very productive use of these beds. It leads to issues over so called bed blockers, and how easy it is to send patients on to care in the community or recuperation in other NHS institutions beyond the District General hospital.

It should surely be relatively easy to provide more beds. Some of the beds and equipment acquired for the Nightingales might be available to get us started. The NHS could also set up specialist units in different properties to undertake procedures like cataract removal or other simpler surgery away from the DG hospital.

Apparently the new issue is the numbers of staff this will need. Of course just adding beds is no use without enough nurses and doctors to administer to the extra patients. I understand that the NHS has many jobs open for applicants currently, with many more posts allowed for in the budget than the NHS has staff. The NHS needs to see what it can do to encourage qualified people to return to its employment and what can be done to promote more people through education and training. The NHS should also consider the balance of work between highly qualified doctors and nurses and other staff to see if more assistance can be safely given to the medically trained to provide great service to more patients.